



## **Michigan National Organization for Women**

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**Testimony Concerning House Bill 4192  
before the  
Michigan House Judiciary Committee  
August 26, 2009  
by  
Mary Pollock, Legislative Vice-President**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 4192 which would add to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights a prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression in employment, housing, public accommodations, public service, and educational facilities.

NOW is committed to fighting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in all areas, including employment, housing, public accommodations, health services, child custody and military policies. NOW is committed to educational efforts that combat the adverse effects of homophobia, promote positive images in the media and ultimately ensure civil rights protection for all. NOW asserts the right of lesbians to live their lives with dignity and security.

This can only happen if lesbians, gay, bi-sexual, or transgendered are protected by the laws of our state. Assuring remedies for LGBT people is not giving special rights, but assuring equal rights. Seventeen states have adopted non-discrimination measures similar to this bill. Fifteen cities in Michigan have enacted civil rights protections for LGBT people. Yet a negative climate for LGBT people has been set by passage of Proposal 04-02 banning gay marriages in Michigan. Civil rights protections are needed now more than ever.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is the largest, most comprehensive multi-issue feminist advocacy group in the United States. Our purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in society — sharing equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities with men, while living free from discrimination.

Michigan NOW thanks you for the opportunity to comment on HB 4192.